

## Legislation Text

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Urging the United States House of Representatives to pass H.R. 7947, also known as the “Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act,” providing substantial and additional aid to older foster youth and kinship families and preventing mandatory “aging out” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHEREAS, Every year, more than 20,000 United States youth exit foster care between the ages of 18-21. Approximately 1,000 Pennsylvania youth ‘aged-out’ of foster care in 2019. Foster youth are likely to age out of the foster care system without the support of family, trusted adults, or strong plans to support their transition to adulthood; and

WHEREAS, Within five years of exiting care, approximately 45 percent of foster youth are homeless, 47 percent are unemployed, 26 percent are incarcerated, and nine percent die; and

WHEREAS, The extreme challenges faced by older and former foster youth are exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, and additional support for foster children, youth, and their families is critical. While state and local leaders have put forth important efforts to support youth aging out of foster care, federal policy is essential to ensuring these youth are not left behind; and

WHEREAS, The bipartisan federal legislation, H.R. 7947, introduced by Congressman Danny Davis (IL) and co-sponsored by twelve members including Congressman Dwight Evans (PA), presents a clear plan to deliver support and provide critical resources to foster youth and their families. Passage of the bill would provide essential relief for older foster youth and their families navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Emergency support for children and aid for families of child welfare-involved youth would help families stay together and ensure children in foster care have the resources and stability they need throughout the duration of this crisis; and

WHEREAS, \$400 million would be allotted to the Chafee Foster Care Program, which would help older youth successfully transition from foster care to adulthood while maintaining their health and wellbeing amidst the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Within this allocation to the Chafee Foster Care Program, \$50 million would be provided to raise the amount available to foster youth via Education and Training vouchers from \$5,000 to \$12,000 annually, providing more flexibility for youth to pursue their educational and life goals. Additionally, eligibility would be extended from twenty-one to twenty-seven years of age, ensuring that older foster youth are able to continue receiving the support they need. A moratorium would be issued for youth who do not wish to age out of care during the pandemic and would allow for re-entry into care for youth who have already exited care; and

WHEREAS, Additional provisions within this legislation would provide increased funding and support for the Kinship Navigator Program, which provides support and aid to relatives who are raising children, as well as for the Home Visiting Program, which provides flexibility for home visits to continue throughout the COVID-19 crisis. In Philadelphia, over half of the approximately 8,000 children in foster care are in kinship care and would benefit from this increased support; and

WHEREAS, Further provisions would create support for the Court Improvement Program, which provides funding for technology grants and trainings to facilitate remote hearings and for trauma-informed, evidence-based mental health, substance use, and parenting programs to keep families strong and children safely at home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Urges the United States House of Representatives to pass H.R. 7947, also known as the “Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act,” providing substantial and additional aid to older foster youth and kinship families and preventing mandatory “aging out” during the COVID-19 pandemic.